(d) what are the criteria fixed by Government for issuing such agencies and

(e) the number of licences for LPG Agencies and retail outlets which have been issued in each State on the recommendations of the Members of Parliament during each of the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a)

	RO	LPG
1989-90 .	304	184
1990-91 .	228	100
Total .	532	284

(b) A few cases of benami transactions of dealerships and distributorships have been reported by the Marketing Oil Companies. While some of them have been terminated after investigation, other cases are at various stages of investigation.

(c) and (d) LPG distributorships and RO dealerships are opened in a phased manner at different locations in the country subject to product availability and economic viability under various Marketing Plans.

(e) Selection of all dealers are carried out as per Industry Guidelines under various categories through approved Selection Boards and also at the discretion of Government.

Conference on Petroleum Sector

282. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a recent Conference on the Petroleum Sector has suggested gradual deregulation of prices of petroleum and petroleum products ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) what steps are being taken to implement its recommendations ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) In a Conference convened by the Institute of Public Enterprise and "Urja" on February 28, 1992, steps like international parity price for crude, freedom to refineries to purchase crude from any source, fixation of ex-refinery product prices on the basis of international refinery margin with suitable adjustments and determination of product patterns in the refineries by market price etc. were suggested towards deregulation of prices. Changes in the pricing are made by the Government keeping in view costs, growth in demand and socio-economic factors.

Setting up of Petro-Chemical Projects

283. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gas Authority of India Ltd. has proposed to set up two petro chemical projects ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) the present stage of implementation of these Units ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Gas Authority of India Ltd. has proposed to set up a Petro-chemical Complex for the production of Propylene at Bijaipur in M.P. and production of Ethylene and other down-stream products at Auraiya in U.P. The proposal for setting up the Auraiya Petro chemical Complex is under the consideration of Government. In the case of Bijaipur, the technological viability is under examination.

Oil Refinery at Numaligarh in Assam

284. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government had decided to set up a fourth Oil Refinery at Numaligarh in Assam ;

(b) if so, what is the present stage of the project; and

(c) by when the construction of the refinery is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c) The proposal to set up an Oil refinery at Numaligarh in Assam has been cleared by the Public Investment Board (PIB) and is being processed for final approval of the Government. The Implementation schedule has not been finalised.

Drilling of Oil and Gas by Private Sector

285. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received a number of proposals from the private sector for drilling of oil and gas;

(b) if so, how many proposals have been received by the Government so far;

(c) whether any decision has been taken to allow private sector for drilling of oil gas; and

(d) how much time Government will take a final decision in regard to allowing private sector for drilling oil and gas?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (d) Government had invited bids from Indian and foreign private companies under the Fourth Round of bidding for explorations for oil and natural gas in 72 blocks—39 offshore and 33 onshore—in India. The last date for receipt of bids was 15-4-1992. A total of 24 bids have been received from 31 companies, either on their own or in consortium, for 13 blocks—5 offshore and 8 onshore. The contracts will be finalised as early as possible.

Supply of Gas to Utteran Power Station

286. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Oil & Natural Gas Commission has committed to supply gas to Utteran power station in Gujarat;

(b) what are the reasons for not fulfilling the commitment to supply gas to the Utteran power project in Gujarat; and

(c) by when gas is likely to be supplied to Utteran power station of Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c) Production and transportation constraints in South Gujarat have delayed the supply of gas to the Utteran Power Station. Alternative possibilities for making gas available for the power station expeditiously are being looked into.

गैस एजेंसी का आवंटन

287. **श्री राधाकिशन मालवीय :** क्या पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) देश में प्राकृतिक गैस की कुल कितनी आवश्यकता है;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि बीस हजार से अधिक जनसंख्या वाले स्थानों पर गैस एजेंसी आवंटित की जाती है,

(ग) यदि हां, तो बीस हजार से अधिक जनसंख्या वाले नगर के बाहर गैस कनेक्शन देने का कार्य क्षेत्र कितने किलोमीटर तक होता है,

(घ) क्या ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में गैस कनेक्शन देने का कोई प्रावधान है; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री (श्री बी० शंकरानन्द) : (क) पहले ही किए गए करीब